

## An Exposition of the Prophecies, &amp;c.

BY J. B. LAIR.

## Chap. 3rd. ISRAEL TO RETURN TO THE PROMISED LAND-AGAIN.

Having shown in the foregoing chapter that the "Land embraced in the Abrahamic covenant was to enjoy special favor, so to speak it is obvious however that the land is not favored for itself alone, but it must be for some other purpose; indeed nearly every Scripture that speaks of the land being favored, also speaks in the same connection of the people of the covenant, and their relation to the land. So it is clear that the people of the covenant are to enjoy the land covenanted, and the land is blest for the people's sake. But not only is the land almost an entire waste now, but the people who are so intimately related to the land by covenant, scattered all over the earth, into every nation as Moses told them they would be if they did not obey their God.

Before entering fully into the subject of the return of Israel to their land, I wish to first call attention to their scattering or being driven out of their land.

After Israel was delivered from Egypt by the hand of Moses, and just before the demise of Moses and the crossing over Jordan into the promised land, Moses tells them by the Spirit what their future will be, if they obey the Lord, and love and serve him, it shall go well with them. If they will not, there shall curses come upon them, they shall be driven out of the land, and other people shall possess it, and they shall even "Become an astonishment, a proverb, and a by word among all nations whither the Lord shall lead them." Deut. 28: 37. For "the Lord shall scatter thee among all people from the one end of the earth even unto the other \* \* \* and among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shalt the soles of thy feet have rest: but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes and sorrows of mind, and thy life shall hang in doubt before thee and thou shalt fear day and night, and shall have none assurance of thy life; in the morning thou shalt say, would to God it were even, and at even thou shalt say would to God it were morning, for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear" &c. Deut. 28: 64, 67.

It is plainly taught in these Scriptures that Israel went into the promised land under conditions. Under certain conditions they were to remain, but under other circumstances they were to be scattered "among all nations;" the latter condition having been obtained, the ten tribes were taken captive by Shalmaneser, about 730 years after they entered the promised land, and carried into Assyria, locating them by the river Gozan, 2 Kings 17 ch. And so the "Lord removed Israel out of his sight, as he had said by all his servants the Prophets. So was Israel carried away out of their own land to Assyria unto this day." 17 v. Indeed it is "unto this day," for the ten tribes have never as yet been returned unto "their own land," and their removal occurred 720 years before Christ. And something over a hundred years from the carrying away of the ten tribes, the two tribes were carried away to Babylon; they however remained only 70 years, and were returned to their land again, and remained until they were overthrown and taken captives by Titus the Roman, and until this day the twelve tribes remain scattered among all nations "whither the Lord has driven them." And we are witnesses to the fulfillment of the Scriptures, that they have "become a proverb and an astonishment, among the nations," and that particularly among some nations; "they find no ease nor rest," "Their life hanging in doubt having no assurance of their lives" &c. This is true of them at this day in both Russia and Morocco, saying nothing of their condition in many other countries. Now these things being facts to our own knowledge, let us look at the future prospect of Israel according to the Prophets. At a time when Israel were captives and Judah were not, but were still in their own land, Isa. prophesies thus, "And it shall come to pass in that day that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover, the remnant of his people which shall be left from Assyria, and from Egypt, &c. \* \* \* And the Lord shall ut-

terly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea, and with his mighty wind shall he shake his hand over the river, and shall smite it in its seven streams, and make men go over dry shod; and there shall be a highway for the remnant of his people which shall be left from Assyria, like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt." Isa. 11: 11, 15, 16.

Here are statements that ought to convince any body that there will be "another gathering," for the Lord will set his hand again the second time to gather his people, and the next time it will not only be from Egypt but it will be from all parts of the earth, whether they be gone; and the Lord will not only part the waters of the Red sea, but he "will utterly destroy it," "The tongue of Egyptian sea," and will cause them to cross the Nile "dry shod." These are all plain and emphatic statements, and there can be no mistake in their meaning.

In Isa. 11: 12, both nations are mentioned, as being returned to their land, and Jer. 30: 3, says, "For lo, the days come saith the Lord that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the Lord, and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it." The same prophet in his 23 chapter says: "In those days Judah shall be saved, and Israel dwell safely. \* \* \* Therefore the days come saith the Lord, that they shall no more say, the Lord liveth which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt, but the Lord liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country (Russia) and from all countries which I have driven them, and they shall dwell in their own land," and in the 32 chap. we read, "Behold I will gather them out of all countries whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath, and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely, and they shall be my people and I will be their God, and I will give them one heart, and one way that they may fear me forever for the good of them, and of their children after them, I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good, but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me; yea I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart, and with my whole soul. For thus saith the Lord, like as I have brought all this great evil upon this people, so will I bring upon them all the good that I have promised them." 37: 42.

Now we go to Ezk. 37 ch, and read "Thus saith the Lord God, behold I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side and bring them into their own land, and I will make them one nation in the land in the mountains of Israel, and one King shall be King to them all and they shall no more be two nations; neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all, and they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt, and they shall dwell therein, they and their children forever; and my servant David shall be their Prince forever. Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them, it shall be an everlasting covenant with them and I will place them and multiply them and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them forever more." And Isa. adds this testimony; and my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation and in sure dwellings and in quiet resting places." 32: 18.

Again. "Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing into Zion: and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads, and they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and mourning shall flee away. Isa. 51: 11.

The testimony is not all in yet, but it is sufficient to prove:

1st. That both nations shall return to the land covenanted to their fathers; this has never occurred since they were divided immediately after Solomon's death. But they shall be united again, and "Become one kingdom, and one King shall reign over them, and they shall not be two nations any more forever." All the Scriptures relating to this subject are purely prophetic, and the most

casual observer of the history of the world knows that they have never been fulfilled, for Israel has never had a name as a nation since they were carried into Assyria by Shalmaneser, more than 700 years before Christ. And Judah after its return from Babylon was only a dependency; but the Prophet says, they, the two nations shall "become one and one King shall reign over them, and they shall not be divided any more at all."

2nd. It is noticeable that the above state of affairs will be brought about by Divine interference, for the Lord has declared that he would put a new heart and a new Spirit within them, and will take away the stony heart. (Ezk. 36: 26.) In Jer. it says "I will give them one heart and one way." 32: 29. Indeed the Lord says that "I will put my Spirit in you and cause you to walk in my statutes" &c. Ezk. 36: 27.

The Lord is going to operate upon them by his Divine power to bring about the desired end. The Lord has determined to have a people on the earth yet, that will answer the purpose for which man was created. And he covenanted with Abraham Isaac, Jacob and David to that end, and he is able, and will accomplish his purposes. He is going to do it with a high hand and an outstretched arm, and it is the covenanted seed that are to answer this end. The Gentiles have no part in this covenant only as they become sons through faith in Christ Jesus. The object of the Gospel is to "take out from among the nations a people for his name." Those who accept and obey Christ, become the seed of Abraham, and heirs of the promise, and they will be sharers in the glorious Kingdom that Christ will establish at his second coming; they will willingly accept the glorious situation, but it appears from the prophecy that the house of Israel will not so willingly accept, but after they experience thing similar to what Israel experienced in the wilderness, they will accept Christ. Hear the Prophet, "As I live saith the Lord God, surely with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm,

(Continued next week.)

## Lost Opportunities.

Every day brings to each of us opportunities which we may neglect, or never notice. We have an opportunity of speaking in behalf of truth and justice, and we are silent. We decline to take our stand against public prejudice or public opinion. We are afraid of being opposed or ridiculed, or of being out of the fashion; and so we do nothing when we ought to act, and the opportunity goes by. We are like the man who hid his pound in a napkin and buried it in the earth, and said, "Lord, I was afraid!" We are like the woman who put her two mites into the treasury, and was probably criticised by the bystanders for her very small donation. Yes, she may have been criticised by them; but, then she was commended by Jesus, and has gone into the Gospel of mankind as an example of right-doing. She did not lose her opportunity. Let us do what we can, and we shall not be followed into the other world by our lost opportunities bearing witness against us in the great day of account and retribution. Every movement of conscience is an opportunity. And remember that we are never called to do anything more than is in our power. If we can say, "I have done what I could," that is enough.—JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE.

The art of living deserves a place among the fine arts. Like literature, it may be ranked with the humanities. It is the art of turning the means of living to the best account—of making the best of everything. It is the art of extracting from life its highest enjoyments, and through it, of reaching its highest results. To live happily, the exercise of no small degree of arts is required. Like poetry and painting, the art of living comes chiefly by nature; but all can cultivate and develop it. It can be fostered by parents and teachers, and perfected by self-culture. Without intelligence, it cannot exist.—SAMUEL SMILES.

A thing to be thankful for is that God so sifts our prayers that only the right ones are answered. If all the foolish ones were granted, we would have unspeakable suffering.